

What is claimed is:

1. A method for recycling an individual tire comprising the steps of:  
compacting said individual tire into a compacted form; and  
maintaining said individual tire in said compacted form.
- 5 2. The method of claim 1 wherein in said compacted form a cubic volume of said individual tire is reduced by at least fifty percent.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of compacting said individual tire comprises pinching said compacted tires at one or more locations to form an indentation at each location and said step of maintaining said individual tire in said compacted form comprises  
10 inserting a coupling element at the indentation.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein said coupling element is a nail, staple, wire or thread.
- 5 The method of claim 1 further comprising before the step of compacting the individual tire the step of:  
15 marking said individual tire with an identifier.
- 6 The method of claim 5 wherein said identifier represents identification of a tire generator.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein said identifier is a sequence of letters, numbers or symbols.
- 20 8. A system for recycling an individual tire comprising:  
means for compacting said individual tire into a compacted form; and  
means for maintaining said individual tire in said compacted form.
9. The system of claim 8 wherein in said compacted form a cubic volume of said individual tire is reduced by at least fifty percent.
- 25 10. The system of claim 8 wherein said means for compacting said individual tire comprises a first crushing plate, a second crushing plate and a main piston cylinder coupled to said first crushing plate and said second crushing plate, said main piston cylinder moving said first crushing plate toward and away from said second crushing plate.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein said main piston has a compressed air or hydraulic configuration.

12. The system of claim 10 further comprising a proximity sensor for sensing a distance between said first crushing plate and said second crushing plate, said proximity sensor  
5 activating said means for maintaining said individual tire in compacted form when said main piston cylinder reaches full extension.

13. The system of claim 8 wherein said means for maintaining said individual tire in said compacted form comprises:

means for pinching said compacted tires at one or more locations; and  
10 means for inserting a coupling element at the pinched locations.

14. The system of claim 13 wherein said means for pinching comprises one or more protrusions extending from a first crushing plate and a second crushing plate.

15. The system of claim 13 wherein said coupling element is a nail, staple, wire or thread.

15 16. The system of claim 15 wherein said coupling element is held by a drive bushing to each of said one or more protrusions.

17. The system of claim 8 further comprising:  
means for marking said individual tire with an identifier.

18. The system of claim 17 wherein said identifier represents identification of a tire  
20 generator.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein said identifier is a sequence of letters, numbers or symbols.

20. A method of handling scrap tires comprising:  
providing a scrap tire compacting apparatus for receiving an individual scrap tire;  
25 compacting said individual scrap tire into a compacted form;  
maintaining said individual scrap tires in said compacted form;  
collecting said individual scrap tire in compacted form; and

transporting said collected individual scrap tires to a transfer station, recycling facility or end user.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein in said compacted form a cubic volume of said individual tire is reduced by at least fifty percent.

5 22. The method of claim 20 wherein said step of collecting said scrap tires is performed by collecting said scrap tires in a tire collection enclosure.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the tire collection enclosure is a trailer or self dumping container.

10 24. The method of claim 20 wherein said step of compacting said individual scrap tires produces one or more indentations adjacent to a protrusion and said step of collecting tires comprises stacking said one or more indentations of a first said scrap tire in one or more protrusions of an adjacent second scrap tire.